

FORM B – BUILDING



Recorded by Nancy S. Seasholes

Organization Lexington Historical Commission

Date (month / year) January 1998

Assessor's Number 0063000115 USGS Quad Boston N. Area(s) Form Number 706

Town Lexington

Place (neighborhood or village)

Address 43 Adams St.

Historic Name Amos Locke House

Uses: Present Residential

Original Residential

Date of Construction 1840–1843 (under construction)

Source Lexington Valuation lists; Deeds

Style/Form Greek Revival

Architect/Builder

Exterior Material:

Foundation Granite

Wall/Trim Wood Clapboard

Roof Asphalt Shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures

Major Alterations (with dates)

Rear addition (date unknown)

Enclosed entry (date unknown)

N

Condition Fair

Moved ☒ no ☐ yes Date

Acreage 3 A.

Setting On an open rise next to a heavily-trafficked residential street leading from the north part of town to Lexington Center

BUILDING FORM

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION ☐ see continuation sheet

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

43 Adams St. is one of only 10 side-gabled Greek Revival cottages in Lexington and is one of the most intact; the most comparable house is at 27 Maple St. (MHC #652). In addition, the setting of 43 Adams St.—on an open rise and very visible to those driving south on Adams St.—is a real reminder of Lexington's agricultural past. The house is rectangular, 1½ stories, five-by-one bays, and side-gabled with a small rear chimney. The house has few period finishes other than cornerboards and a frieze board across the front and rear. An enclosed entry has been added as has a side-gabled rear addition with a small ridge chimney.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE ☒ see continuation sheet

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

This house was started in 1840 by an Amos Locke. Distantly related to the Locke family who owned a large amount of land in north Lexington in the mid-19th century, Amos' father had moved to Lexington from what is now Arlington. In April 1840, when Amos was only 15½ (if his birth date in Hudson's *Genealogies* is correct), he bought an eight-acre parcel that included the three acres on which this house is now located. There was no mention of a house when he bought this land, but, in April 1841 when he mortgaged this same eight acres, the agreement included the "buildings thereon," indicating that he had probably built this house in the intervening year. Actually, Lexington assessors' records for 1841 indicate that these "buildings thereon" were a barn and a still unfinished house. In 1841 Amos also bought an adjoining 15 acres and in 1842 an additional 8 acres, thus amassing a 31-acre farm at the corner of what are now Adams and East streets. Amos was in constant financial difficulty—the house was not actually finished until 1843, and Amos had mortgaged the original 8-acre parcel not only in 1841 but also in 1840 when he first bought it, mortgaged the 15 acres when he bought it in 1841, and the additional 8 acres when he purchased them in 1842. Finally, in 1843 Amos sold the entire 31-acre farm to his brother William, who had to buy it again for a nominal sum when it was auctioned in 1844 to settle some of Amos' debts.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES ☐ see continuation sheet

May Baskin, personal communication 1998.

Hudson, Charles. *History of the Town of Lexington*. Revised and continued to 1912 by the Lexington Historical Society.

Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1913. 2: 379, 85.

Lexington Valuation Lists. 1841–1845.

Middlesex Registry of Deeds. Deeds. Cambridge, MA. 392: 274, 401: 413, 407: 139, 415: 393; 395: 352, 408: 423, 423: 430, 450: 140; 481: 557, 787: 391, 932: 86, 2244: 247, 2244: 253, 2505: 152, 2505: 156, 4512: 326, 4745: 216, 7006: 402, 7337: 529, 7310: 424.

———. *Plan of Land in Lexington, Mass, Aug. 4, 1948*. Plan No. 1252 of 1948.

☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. *If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town
Lexington

Property Address
43 Adams St.

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

706

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE (continued)

William Locke only owned the farm until 1846 before selling it to Charles Pook, a Charlestown cooper. Pook remained in Charlestown and apparently rented this house to Sidney Butterfield, for Butterfield's granddaughter, who grew up in the house at 149 Adams St. (MHC #721) said her father (b. 1855) was born in this house at 43 Adams St. In 1858 Pook moved to Lexington, built the house at 17 Adams St. (MHC #700), and sold this house and farm to Butterfield. Butterfield lost the farm in 1864 in a mortgage foreclosure, however, and it then was acquired by a George H. Chapman. In 1884 George F. Chapman, presumably a son of George H., built the house now at 39 Adams St. (MHC #703) on land that was then part of this farm. That house then became the main farmhouse and this one was rented out. In 1893 Chapman's widow sold the farm to William Prior, a fish dealer at Quincy Market in Boston, and at that time 5½ acres with the house at 39 Adams St. were set off and sold to Prior's wife as a separate parcel, reducing the size of the farm associated with this house at 43 Adams St. to 25½ acres. In 1896 Prior's widow sold both the farm at 43 Adams St. and the house at 39 Adams St. to an Irving Johnson from Arlington. Johnson and his son Frederick W. were market gardeners; the father lived in the house at 39 Adams St. and the son in this house at 43 Adams St. After Johnson's death in 1917 the farm, by then more accurately surveyed as containing 27.95 acres, was sold in 1922 to the Porter family; the house at 39 Adams was also sold to the Porters in 1924.

William Porter and his brother-in-law Matthew Wilson operated the farm, the Porters living at 39 Adams St. and the Wilsons in this house. The farm raised market vegetables. Greenhouses were later acquired in Belmont and reassembled here, covering much of the land along East St. where the Fiske School playing field and Fiske Common are now located and permitting winter cultivation of tomatoes and cucumbers and, later, roses. In the 1930s the Porters began to sell off small parcels of the farm—first, a few acres for a bird sanctuary, now owned by the town, then the land for the house now at 45 Adams St., built by the Porter's daughter May and her husband John Baskin. After World War II the farm was completely subdivided and sold off—the three-acre parcel with this house in 1946, a much larger piece where Fiske School is now located to the town in 1947, and the house at 39 Adams St. in 1948. In 1997–98 both the 43 Adams St. and the 39 Adams St. properties—a total of about five acres—were acquired by a developer with plans to build five single-family houses on the combined parcel.